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House of Representatives
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PLEASE REPLY TO:

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Director Richard Flynn
Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency
2605 Interstate Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17110

February 27, 2017

Dear Director Flynn,

I write to you to ask that you make a simple but critical change to protect the security of the entire Delaware Valley. The current method for distributing federal security grant funding in our region is dangerously flawed and leaves unaddressed vulnerabilities that pose a threat to the security of South Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware alike. I respectfully request your assistance addressing this issue.

We both have constituents who have legitimate concerns regarding hateful incitement and violence. In the recent months dozens of Jewish Community Centers (JCC) have been targeted by sophisticated bomb threats forcing the mass evacuations of hundreds of people. Today, the Katz JCC in Cherry Hill was targeted by a bomb threat intended to incite fear and intimidate the Jewish community. Another bomb threat was made to Siegel JCC in Delaware. The recent rise of anti-Semitic and Islamophobic rhetoric and incidents cannot be ignored and yet one half of the Philadelphia metropolitan area remains unprotected by a critical federal security effort. We cannot allow false boundaries and trivial bureaucratic concerns stop us from taking action to prevent attacks like which occurred at the Charleston African Methodist Episcopal Church or at the Kansas City Jewish Community Center.

In addition, along the Delaware River between our states there are points of critical infrastructure that are at risk of terrorist action, such as the refineries along the waterfront and the Ports of Camden, Paulsboro, and Philadelphia. Those who would seek to do us harm do not care which bank of the Delaware River their targets lie on and it would be shortsighted to assume as much.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant program is the federal government's response to the security risks faced by our nation's most threatened urban areas. Annually since its inception FEMA has determined that the Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington Metropolitan Statistical Area is at high enough risk that they should be provided UASI funding. FEMA has also decided that the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency be charged with forming a designated "Urban Area" that constitutes the area around Philadelphia that is allowed to apply for security funding. Please see the enclosed letter from FEMA confirming Pennsylvania's responsibility for drawing these borders.
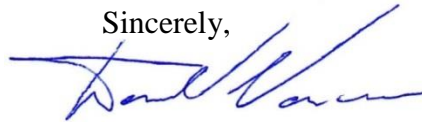
The Fiscal Year 2016 Homeland Security Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity states that the Urban Area should include contiguous areas with established formal mutual aid

agreements. An existing mutual aid agreement between the City of Philadelphia and the State of New Jersey both highlights the need for cooperation, and that a safe South Jersey means a safe

Philadelphia. When the Pope visited Philadelphia, the plan to evacuate Philadelphia's Center City, should the worst should occur, was to move the civilian population across the Benjamin Franklin Bridge into Camden City. The South Jersey area used to determine the need for a Philadelphia region UASI fits not only the requirements for inclusion but deserves to receive the support of the UASI program.

For the sake of our region's security I urge you to expand the designated Urban Area, honoring PEMA's commitment under the UASI program to support regional security. I truly believe that this is the best way we can both keep our area safe from the threats faced by our communities. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Donald Norcross
Member of Congress